

# **The Morphological Interference of Twitter Statuses of Javanese University Students**

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SEMARANG  
2015**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Twitter is one of the most popular social media in Indonesia, for Indonesian people like to share their thoughts and opinions through this media. Since Indonesia is a multilingual country, we can find language interference phenomenon in twitter statuses. The purpose of this study is to identify the language interference that took forms of morphological interferences on twitter. The study uses non-participant observation method to collect the data and translational method to analyze the data. The findings of this research suggest that morphological interference of Javanese happens in the form of Javanese affixation. Factors that cause the interference to occur are the familiarity with more than one language, the environment and the prestige of using first language.

Keywords: Affixation, interference, twitter status

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## **I. Introduction**

Multilingualism is a common phenomenon in society nowadays. People are not only able to speak one language but also able to speak other languages. Indonesian people, for example, are able to speak at least two languages, which are a local language and national language Indonesian, or Indonesian and one foreign language.

There are more than 500 languages used in Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesian people are multilingual. In a multilingual community, language contact cannot be avoided. Language contact occurs when there is a contact between two languages or more that cause a language to change. Later, language contact can lead to phenomena like diglossia, interference, integration, code-switching, code-mixing, convergence and language shift (Holmes, 2001).

In Indonesian society, language contact, especially interference phenomena can be found on Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)), which is one of the most popular social media around the world. Furthermore, Indonesia is ranked fifth for the countries with the biggest number of twitter users as surveyed by SemioCast in 2012.

In this study, I try to answer the following questions, “what kind of Javanese morphological interference occurs in the statuses of Javanese twitter users?” and “what are the factors that cause interference to occur?” .

The purpose of the study is to identify morphological interferences made by Javanese users on twitter. The significance of this study is that we will know more about first language interference especially in the case of Javanese.

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

In analyzing the data, I use two theories that are in accordance with language acquisition. The theories deal with the process how human acquires language. In 1960s, rejecting the behaviorism explanation of language acquisition, Chomsky introduced Universal Grammar (UG). UG is a set of principles and parameters that constrain all human languages. UG is embedded in parts of brain called Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

Seeing the problem from sociolinguistic perspective, language phenomenon like interference can happen in a multilingual community, as there are contacts between languages (Holmes, 2001). When a speaker masters two languages or more, the different structures of the languages can make him confused and tend to make deviations. The common deviations made are code mixing and code switching. However, language interference might also happen when the languages influence one another.

The term “interference” was firstly used by Weinreich, he states that

Those instances of deviation from the norms either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as interference phenomena. (1968:1)

According to Weinreich, there are several factors that influence the occurrence of language interference, which are: the familiarity with more than one language, the lack vocabulary in target language or L2, the prestige of using L1, formal presentation including influence of competent, performance, the acquisition sequences and factors from the first language and environment.

In addition, to draw a line between language interference and code-switching, we must consider that there is a language transfer in interference, while both languages are kept separately in code-switching. Language interference can take bound morpheme, but code-switching constrains to free morpheme.

Through his book, *Languages in Contact* (1968), Weinreich mentions that systemic and structural difference between L1 and L2 can lead to interferences on phonological, grammatical and lexical levels. The grammatical level includes morphological and syntactical interference. Morphological interference becomes the one that often appears, dealing with word formation.

Javanese is one of many local languages in Indonesia, and it is the language that has the biggest number of users in Indonesia. The condition in which Javanese speakers use Javanese and Indonesian alternately in their daily life can lead to a mixture of both languages. When a Javanese speaker produces sentences in Indonesian, his first language has strong influence towards the latter.

One of the morphological processes in Indonesian is affixation (Matthews, 1991). It is similar with Javanese. Therefore, there is a high chance of interference that happens. Javanese affixes attached to Indonesian roots lead to deviation in word formation. This deviation is what we refer to as Interference.

Javanese affixes consist of prefix, suffix and combination of prefix and suffix or circumfix (Cahyono, 1995). The example of its application can be seen in the word *Ngumbah*. It is derived from Javanese word *umbah* (wash) that attached to prefix *N-*. *N-* turns into *Ng-* when it meets words that start with /k,g,l,r,y/ and vowels. Other Javanese affixes are *dak-/tak-*, *kok-/tok-*, *di-*, *ka-*, *ke-* (Cahyono, 1995).

### **III. Research Methods**

This paper is qualitative research, describing the first language interference on twitter. I collected phrases and sentences from twitter statuses. Those statuses come from about twenty-five selected twitter accounts. The sampling technique used is purposive, in which I chose sentences written in Indonesian containing morphological interferences of Javanese.

In collecting the data, I used non-participant observation method. According to Sudaryanto (1993), in this kind of method, a researcher does not involve in the conversation and only observe. I searched for twitter users whose first language is Javanese. I observed their tweets and selected utterances containing interference.

In order to find out the factors that cause interference to occur, I used questionnaires filled by the selected twitter users. Furthermore, I also used picture and note taking technique since the data were taken from twitter statuses that had been uploaded in the internet.

To analyze the data, I used reflective introspective identity method since I am a native speaker of Javanese, the first language of the users. I also need this method in order to find out what the texts probably mean, in case there are some proverbs or metaphoric expressions. Translational method in *Padan* method is also used to compare the data with the languages of the users whose status later will be analyzed.

## **IV. Results and Discussion**

In this chapter, I will discuss the analysis based on samples of morphological interferences. The data of this paper were taken from twitter statuses of selected accounts. I chose several accounts owned by Javanese users. Those users are university students around their twenties. They actively tweet in Indonesian. After observing their timeline on twitter, I found interferences of first language in their status. The followings are some of the data found.

### **IV.1 Morphological Interferences of Javanese**

In this research, I will figure out how Javanese morphology influences the formation of words in Indonesian. I found many Indonesian word formations that deviate from its standard, showing the evidence of morphological interference. The followings are description of morphological interferences found in twitter status of Javanese users.

#### IV.I.I The Use of Javanese Affixes

Morphological interference happens when the users attach Javanese affixes to Indonesian roots. This process is called affixation. Affix is a bound morpheme and it can be a prefix, a suffix or their combination. However, from the data I found examples of affixes like suffix *-e* or *-ne* and prefix *tak-* that attached to Indonesian words. Below are some of the data found.

##### I. Suffix *-e* or *-ne*

In the data, many examples show that suffix *-e* or *-ne* used by the users as deviation of proper Indonesian suffix *-nya*. Suffix *-e* or *-ne* can be attached to a noun, adjective or verb. This suffix can also denote pronoun of a third person and be a possessive marker (Wedhawati, 2006). Belows are the examples found,

- (1) *Om kaloke Semarang akusekalianikutpulangeya, entar*  
Uncle if to Semarang 1.SG also follow return ya, later

*taktelfon ayah.*  
*tak.call father.*

“Uncle, if you go to Semarang let me come with you too, I will give my father a call later.”

- (2) *Masacipagant\* harganesekarang 120k,*  
Impossible cipagant\* price + *ne* now 120k

“How come Cipagant\*’s price now is 120k, “

- (3) *Ngambil bet ajaharuskotor-kotorandulu, bajune*  
Ng + take badge just must dirty first, the clothe

*Terlapisi lumpur*  
covered.PASS mud

“Just to take a badge we must go dirty first, the cloth covered in mud.”.

The words *pulange*, *hargane* and *bajune* derived from Indonesian verb and noun attached to Javanese suffix *-e* and *-ne*. From data (1) we know that suffix *-e* is used in words that end with consonants, while suffix *-ne* is used in words with vowels at its end as in data (2) and (3).

This suffix is used as deviation of suffix *-nya* in Indonesian. Therefore, the standard words should be *pulanganya*, *harganya* and *bajunya*..

## II. Prefix *tak-*

In data (4) and (5) below, prefix *tak-* is followed by *kira* and *telfon*. The grammatical function of this prefix is to make up transitive verbs (Wedhawati, 2006). The words could have said *akukira* and *akutelfon*. The prefix serves as bound morpheme for first person singular and is used to replace the subject of verb that is *aku*.

- (4) *Hari Sabtu takkira hari Minggu.*  
Saturday 1.SG-BM.think Sunday

“I thought Saturday was Sunday”

- (5) *Om kalo ke Semarang aku sekalian ikut pulange ya,*  
Uncle ifto Semarang 1.SG also follow return ya,

*Entar taktelfon ayah.*  
later 1.SG-BM.call father.

“Uncle, if you go to Semarang let me come with you too, I will give my father a call later.”

### III. Circumfix *di- ke*

Another example is circumfix *di- ke* or *di-ake* in Javanese. In data (6) and (7) below the *di- ke* attached to Indonesian verb *beli* and *buat*. The function of this circumfix is to construct passive voice (Wedhawati, 2006).

(6) *Makan dibelikerokok     dikasih ini baru pekerjaan*  
Food buy.PASS cigarette give.PASS this new job

*nyaman*  
comfortable

“ They bought us food, they gave us cigarette, this is the so-called comfortable job.”

(7) *Kalo udah bisa buat benang sendiri nanti aku dibuatkeya*  
If already can make snare alone later 1.SG make,PASS ya

“If you can already make the snare by yourself, make one for me later”

The standard Indonesian words for data (6) and (7) are *dibelikan* and *dibuatkan*, with proper circumfix *di-kan*.

## IV.II Factors that Influence the Occurrence of Javanese Interference into Indonesian found on Twitter Status

From the factors mentioned previously, what it seems to be the main factor is the familiarity of users with more than one language. Moreover, it is supported by eighty percent of the users that chose this factor. From the questionnaires, it is known that these users' first language is Javanese. They learnt Indonesian later. That is why when they express something their Javanese has strong influence on their Indonesian utterance. It can be seen from Indonesian word formation (morphology) on twitter statuses of Javanese users. The users attached Javanese affixes to Indonesian roots.



The second factor that causes the users to commit the interference is the environment, chosen by over ten percent of the users. They observed people around them using non-standard form of Indonesian and started to follow it.

Lastly, a very small percentage of the users chose the prestige of using their first language as the third factor that influences them to commit the interference.

## **V. Conclusion**

Indonesia is a multilingual country. In multilingual community, language contact cannot be avoided. Language contact leads to language interference; it is a language phenomenon in which some elements of one language are transferred into the production of another language. Interference can be found on twitter status.

Javanese morphological interferences found in this research happen in the form of affixation and the use of Javanese particles. It is shown from Javanese affixes including suffix *-e* or *-ne* , prefix *tak-* and circumfix *di-ke* attached to Indonesian roots.

There are three factors that mainly drive the Javanese twitter users to commit the interference. First, the familiarity of the users with more than one language. Second, the factors from environment. Lastly, the prestige of using their first language in the production of second language.

Interference in any level (phonology, morphology or syntax) is a threat for a 'language purity' because it can change the structure of the language. Meanwhile, if it is seen from language development, interference in a language mechanism is important to enrich and develop the language so that it can be used in any field.

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